

SOME OF DR. CHARLES A. BRIGGS' VIEWS,
PUBLISHED SINCE HIS SUSPENSION
BY THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY.

Dr. J. J. Lampe.

SOME OF DR. CHARLES A. BRIGGS' VIEWS,
PUBLISHED SINCE HIS SUSPENSION
BY THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY.

SOME OF DR. CHARLES A. BRIGGS' VIEWS, PUBLISHED
SINCE HIS SUSPENSION BY THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY.

The following comparison of the erroneous views advanced by Dr. Charles A. Briggs in his Inaugural Address, for which, on Charges and Specifications regularly made and sustained, he was suspended from the Gospel Ministry by the General Assembly of 1893, with utterances which he has made since then, clearly shows not only that he has re-affirmed those erroneous views, but that he is actively engaged in propagating them, and that he has, in some respects, departed still further from orthodox positions.

In the column on the left will be found some of the Charges and Specifications, together with the extracts from the Inaugural Address on which they were based, and on the ground of which he was condemned. The right-hand column contains extracts: (1) From an address on "The Truthfulness of Holy Scripture," which Dr. Briggs delivered in the City of Chicago, September, 1893, at the World's Parliament of Religions, and which is published in a book which bears the name of *The World's Parliament of Religions*; (2) From an article published over his name in *The Forum* for November, 1893, on "The Alienation of Church and People"; (3) From another article published by him in *The North American Review*, for January, 1894, on "The Sunday School and Modern Criticism."

PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AGAINST

THE REV. CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D. D.

AMENDED CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS.

CHARGE I.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., being a Minister of the said Church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that the Reason

IN *The Forum*, NOVEMBER, 1893, ON
PAGE 367, DR. BRIGGS SAYS:

"Therefore, those who have been trained in the thought of the age, the whole class of learned men, are out of sympathy with the denominations. How can a man of science have any patience with the doctrine of creation and the theory of miracles and prophecy which are commonly taught in theological schools, and from Christian pulpits? How can a man who has been trained in modern psychology, metaphysics and ethics fail to be repelled by the crude philosophy

is a fountain of divine authority which may and does savingly enlighten men, even such men as reject the Scriptures as the authoritative proclamation of the will of God and reject also the way of salvation through the mediation and sacrifice of the Son of God as revealed therein; which is contrary to the essential doctrine of the Holy Scripture and of the Standards of the said Church, that the Holy Scripture is most necessary, and the rule of faith and practice.

SPECIFICATION I.

In an Inaugural Address, which the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., delivered at the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, January 20th, 1891, on the occasion of his induction into the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology, which Address has been published and extensively circulated with the knowledge and approval of the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., and has been republished by him in a second edition with a preface and an appendix, there occur the following sentences:

Page 24, lines 7-10 and 31-33:

“Divine authority is the only authority to which man can yield implicit obedience, on which he can rest in loving certainty and build with joyous confidence. * * * There are historically three great fountains of divine authority—the Bible, the Church, and the Reason.”

Page 27, lines 9 to 21:

“Martineau could not find divine authority in the Church or the Bible, but he did find God enthroned in his own soul. There are those who would refuse these rationalists a place in the company of the faithful. But they forget that the essential thing is to find God and divine certainty, and if these men have found God without the mediation of Church and Bible,

that underlies the dogmas of systems of theology which are regarded as the standards of orthodoxy? How can such a man look with complacency upon the battle over the doctrine of original sin between creationism and traducianism, or the discussion of the freedom of the will? How can he engage to dishonor the reason, to divest himself of his conscience, or to assent to the unethical dogma of immediate sanctification, whether in this life or in any other life? How can the man who has been trained in modern historical investigation accept the traditional denominational history, with so many spurious claims that will not bear the strain of historical criticism?”

Church and Bible are means and not ends; they are avenues to God, but are not God. We regret that these rationalists depreciate the means of grace so essential to most of us, but we are warned lest we commit a similar error, and depreciate the reason and the Christian consciousness."

Inaugural Address, Appendix, Second Edition, pages 88, 89:

"(e.) Unless God's authority is discerned in the forms of the Reason, there is no ground upon which any of the heathen could ever have been saved, for they know nothing of Bible or Church. If they are not savingly enlightened by the Light of the World in the forms of the Reason the whole heathen world is lost forever."

SPECIFICATION II.

In an Inaugural Address, which the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., delivered at the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, January 20th, 1891, on the occasion of his induction into the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology, which Address has been published and extensively circulated with the knowledge and approval of the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., and has been republished by him in a second edition with a preface and an appendix, there occur the following sentences:

Page 28, lines 1 to 22:

"(3.) *The Authority of Holy Scripture.*—We have examined the Church and the Reason as seats of divine authority in an introduction to our theme, *the Authority of the Scriptures*, because they open our eyes to see mistakes that are common to the three departments. Protestant Christianity builds its faith and life on the divine authority contained in the Scriptures, and too often depreciates the Church and the Reason. Spurgeon is an example of the average modern Evangel-

ical, who holds the Protestant position, and assails the Church and Reason in the interest of the authority of Scripture. But the average opinion of the Christian world would not assign him a higher place in the kingdom of God than Martineau or Newman. May we not conclude, on the whole, that these three representative Christians of our time, living in or near the world's metropolis, have, each in his way, found God and rested on divine authority? May we not learn from them not to depreciate any of the means whereby God makes himself known to men? Men are influenced by their temperaments and environments which of the three ways of access to God they may pursue."

CHARGE II.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., being a Minister of the said Church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that the Church is a fountain of divine authority which, apart from the Holy Scripture, may and does savingly enlighten men; which is contrary to the essential doctrine of the Holy Scripture and of the Standards of the said Church, that the Holy Scripture is most necessary and the rule of faith and practice.

SPECIFICATION I.

In an Inaugural Address, which the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., delivered at the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, January 20th, 1891, on the occasion of his induction into the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology, which Address has been published and extensively circulated with the knowledge and approval of the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., and has been

IN *The Forum* FOR NOVEMBER, 1893,
ON PAGE 370, DR. BRIGGS SAYS:

"As a sign of the times, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in this year 1893, declared it to be heterodox to say that the Church is a great fountain of divine authority, and virtually assumed the position that the Presbyterian Church is nothing more than a voluntary society, a religious club, in which the supreme obligation is in the contract assumed by the vow of subscription at ordination."

republished by him in a second edition with a preface and an appendix, there occur the following sentences :

Page 25, lines 1 to 14, inclusive :

“(1.) *The Authority of the Church.*—The majority of Christians from the apostolic age have found God through the Church. Martyrs and Saints, Fathers and Schoolmen, the profoundest intellects, the saintliest lives, have had this experience. Institutional Christianity has been to them the presence-chamber of God. They have therein and thereby entered into communion with all saints. It is difficult for many Protestants to regard this experience as any other than pious illusion and delusion. But what shall we say of a modern like Newman, who could not reach certainty, striving never so hard, through the Bible or the Reason, but who did find divine authority in the institutions of the Church?”

The first and last citations from the Inaugural under Charge I., given above, were repeated under this Charge.

CHARGE III.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., being a Minister of the said Church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that errors may have existed in the original text of the Holy Scripture, as it came from its authors, which is contrary to the essential doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture and in the Standards of the said Church, that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God written, immediately inspired, and the rule of faith and practice.

SPECIFICATION.

In an Inaugural Address, which the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D.,

AT THE WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, DR. BRIGGS SAID :

“The question thus forces itself upon us, can we maintain the truthfulness of these Holy Scriptures in the face of all these modern sciences? We are obliged to admit that there are scientific errors in the Bible, errors of astronomy, of geology, of zoology, of botany, and of anthropology. In all these respects there is no evidence that the authors of these sacred writings had any other knowledge than that possessed by their contemporaries.”—p. 652.

“There are historical mistakes in the Christian Scriptures, mistakes of chronology and geography, errors of historical events and persons, discrep-

delivered at the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, January 20th, 1891, on the occasion of his induction into the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology, which Address has been published and extensively circulated with the knowledge and approval of the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., and has been republished by him in a second edition with a preface and an appendix, there occur the following sentences, beginning with line 4 of page 35:

"I shall venture to affirm that, so far as I can see, there are errors in the Scriptures that no one has been able to explain away; and the theory that they were not in the original text is sheer assumption, upon which no mind can rest with certainty. If such errors destroy the authority of the Bible, it is already destroyed for historians. Men cannot shut their eyes to truth and fact. But on what authority do these theologians drive men from the Bible by this theory of inerrancy? The Bible itself nowhere makes this claim. The creeds of the Church nowhere sanction it. It is a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children. The Bible has maintained its authority with the best scholars of our time, who with open minds have been willing to recognize any error that might be pointed out by Historical Criticism; for these errors are all in the circumstantials and not in the essentials; they are in the human setting, not in the precious jewel itself; they are found in that section of the Bible that theologians commonly account for from the providential superintendence of the mind of the author, as distinguished from divine revelation itself. It may be that this providential superintendence gives infallible guidance in every particular; and it may be that it differs but little, if at all, from the providential superintendence of the fathers and

ancies and inconsistencies in the historians, which cannot be removed by any proper method of interpretation. All such errors are just where you would expect to find them in accurate, truthful writers in ancient times. They used with fidelity the best sources of information accessible to them; ancient poems, popular traditions, legends and ballads, regal and family archives, codes of law and ancient narratives. There is no evidence that they received any of this history by revelation from God. There is no evidence that the Divine Spirit corrected their narratives, either when they were lying uncomposed in their minds or written in manuscripts."—p. 652.

"God spake in much the greater part of the Old Testament through the voices and pens of the human authors of the Scriptures. Did the human voice and pen, in all the numerous writers and editors of Holy Scripture, prior to the completion of the Canon, always deliver an inerrant word? Even if all the writers were so possessed of the Holy Spirit as to be merely passive in his hands, the question arises: Can the finite voice and the finite pen deliver and express the inerrant truth of God? If the language, and the style, and the dialect, and the rhetoric are all natural to the inspired man, is it possible for these to express the infinite truth of God? How can an imperfect word, sentence and clause express a perfect divine truth? It is evident that the writers of the Bible were not, as a rule, in the ecstatic state. The Holy Spirit did not move their hands or their lips. He suggested to their minds and hearts the divine truth they were to teach. They received it by intuition in the forms of their reason; they framed it in conception, in imagination and in fancy. They delivered it in the logical and rhetorical forms of

schoolmen and theologians of the Christian Church. It is not important for our purpose that we should decide this question. If we should abandon the whole field of providential superintendence so far as inspiration and divine authority are concerned and limit divine inspiration and authority to the essential contents of the Bible, to its religion, faith, and morals, we would still have ample room to seek divine authority where alone it is essential, or even important, in the teaching that guides our devotions, our thinking, and our conduct."

speech. If the divine truth passed through the conception and imagination of the human mind, did the human mind conceive it fully, without any defect, without any fault, without any shading of error? Had the human conception no limitations to its reception of the divine truth? Had the human imagination and fancy no colors to impart to the holy instruction? Did the human mind add nothing to it in reasoning or in fancy? Was it delivered in its entirety exactly as it was received?"

"If the human medium could hardly fail to modify the divine truth received by it in revelation, how much more must the human medium influence the divine instruction in connection with Biblical history, lyric poetry, sentences of wisdom, and works of the imagination which make up the body of the Old Testament? Here the mass of the material was derived from human sources of information; the history depended upon oral and documentary evidence; the lyric poetry was the expression of human emotion; the sentence of wisdom was the condensation of human ethical experience; the works of the imagination were efforts to clothe religious lessons in artistic forms of grace and beauty. All we can claim for the Divine Spirit in the production of these parts of the Old Testament is an inspiration which suggests the religious lessons to be imparted."—pp. 654, 655.

IN *The North American Review*, JANUARY, 1894, DR. BRIGGS SAYS:

"The question will often be asked in the Sunday Schools whether the earlier chapters of Genesis are real historical narratives or whether they contain historic facts embellished by legend, myth or tradition; whether the poetic imagination is chiefly responsible for the story of creation and paradise, and of the antediluvians and

patriarchs, endeavoring to teach the most important lessons of the origin of the world of man, and of sin, in beautiful pictures which are easily understood."—p. 70.

"If these stories are regarded as works of the imagination, poetic in structure and poetic in conception; if the days are simply the frame-work to set forth the general orderliness and progressiveness of the creation; the seventh day the appended conception of a later prose writer using the poem of the creation as the basis for the Sabbath of the priestly law; if the story of the serpent and the tree are poetical pictures of that mysterious event, the first entrance of sin into the world, then the great spiritual lessons of the creation and the original sin of man stand out in attractive beauty and power and bear witness to their own credibility. It is really immaterial to these lessons how far the poetical embellishment of the stories may extend or how far it may be in accord with the actual facts of the case."—p. 71.

CHARGE V.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., being a Minister of the said Church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that Moses is not the author of the Pentateuch, which is contrary to direct statements of Holy Scripture and to the essential doctrines of the Standards of the said Church, that the Holy Scripture evidences itself to be the word of God by the consent of all the parts, and that the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself.

SPECIFICATION.

In an Inaugural Address, which the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D.,

IN *The North American Review*, JANUARY, 1894, DR. BRIGGS SAYS:

"Biblical criticism has shown that Moses did not write these books and that the author is unknown. . . . It matters little if a few American professors in theological seminaries renowned for their extreme conservatism, hold the traditional opinion, when the majority of American Biblical scholars agree with all the professional teachers of the Old Testament in all the universities of Protestant Europe that Moses did not write Genesis and Exodus. . . . If the Sunday-school teachers are content to state the facts, that the traditional opinion is that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; that modern criticism

delivered at the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, January 20th, 1891, on the occasion of his induction into the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology, which Address has been published and extensively circulated with the knowledge and approval of the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., and has been republished by him in a second edition with a preface and an appendix, there occurs the following sentence:

Page 33, lines 6-8.

“It may be regarded as the certain result of the science of the Higher Criticism that Moses did not write the Pentateuch.”

holds that he did not write these books; but that the question is unimportant for the religious lessons of these books; he may reserve his own opinion and that of his scholars with safety. But if he undertakes a polemic against Modern Criticism in the interests of the traditional theory, and makes the question a test of orthodoxy, the divisions and heart-burning which are among the ministers will arise among the Sunday-school teachers and scholars; and if he should pursue the unwise course commended by the ultra-conservative teachers and maintain that if Moses did not write Genesis it cannot be inspired, it is altogether probable that not a few teachers and scholars may be forced into a dilemma and be compelled to give up the inspiration of the book.”—p. 68.

“The Sunday-school teacher should be careful lest he risk the credibility of Genesis with the assertion of its Mosaic authorship. He should teach that many of the best modern critics deny the Mosaic authorship of Genesis and yet maintain its credibility.”—p. 70.

CHARGE VIII.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., being a Minister of the said Church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that Sanctification is not complete at death, which is contrary to the essential doctrine of Holy Scripture and of the Standards of the said Church that the souls of believers are at their death at once made perfect in holiness.

SPECIFICATION.

In an Inaugural Address, which the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., delivered at the Union Theological

IN *The Forum*, NOVEMBER, 1893, DR. BRIGGS SAYS:

“How can he engage to dishonor the reason, to divest himself of his conscience, or to assent to the unethical dogma of immediate sanctification, whether in this life or in any other life?”—p. 367.

Seminary in the City of New York, January 20th, 1891, on the occasion of his induction into the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology, which Address has been published and extensively circulated with the knowledge and approval of the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., and has been republished by him in a second edition with a preface and an appendix, there occur the following sentences :

Pages 53, 54, 55 :

“(c.) Another fault of Protestant theology is in its limitation of the process of redemption to this world, and its neglect of those vast periods of time which have elapsed for most men in the Middle State between death and the resurrection. The Roman Catholic Church is firmer here, though it smears the Biblical doctrine with not a few hurtful errors. The reaction against this limitation, as seen in the theory of second probation, is not surprising. I do not find this doctrine in the Bible, but I do find in the Bible the doctrine of a Middle State of conscious higher life in the communion with Christ and the multitude of the departed of all ages; and of the necessity of entire sanctification, in order that the work of redemption may be completed. There is no authority in the Scriptures, or in the creeds of Christendom, for the doctrine of immediate sanctification at death. The only sanctification known to experience, to Christian orthodoxy, and to the Bible, is progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification after death, is the doctrine of the Bible and the Church; and it is of vast importance in our times that we should understand it, and live in accordance with it. The bugbear of a judgment immediately after death, and the illusion of a magical transformation in the dying hour, should be banished from the world. They are conceits

derived from the Ethnic religions, and without basis in the Bible or Christian experience as expressed in the symbols of the Church. The former makes death a terror to the best of men, the latter makes human life and experience of no effect; and both cut the nerves of Christian activity and striving after sanctification. Renouncing them as hurtful, unchristian errors, we look with hope and joy for the continuation of the processes of grace, and the wonders of redemption in the company of the blessed, to which the faithful are all hastening."

Inaugural Address, Appendix, 2d ed., pages 107, 108: "Sanctification has two sides—a negative and a positive—mortification and vivification; the former is manward, the latter is Godward. Believers who enter the middle state, enter guiltless: they are pardoned and justified; they are mantled in the blood and righteousness of Christ; and nothing will be able to separate them from His love. They are also delivered from all temptations such as spring from without, from the world and the devil. They are encircled with influences for good such as they have never enjoyed before. But they are still the same persons, with all the gifts and graces, and also the same habits of mind, disposition and temper they had when they left the world. Death destroys the body. It does not change the moral and religious nature of man. It is unpsychological and unethical to suppose that the character of the disembodied spirit will all be changed in the moment of death. It is the Manichean heresy to hold that sin belongs to the physical organization and is laid aside with the body. If this were so, how can any of our race carry their evil natures with them into the middle state and incur the punishment of their sins? The eternal punishment of a man

whose evil nature has been stripped from him by death and left in the grave, is an absurdity. The Plymouth Brethren hold that there are two natures in the redeemed—the old man and the new. In accordance with such a theory, the old man might be cast off at death. But this is only a more subtle kind of Manicheism, which has ever been regarded as heretical. Sin, as our Saviour teaches, has its source in the heart—in the higher and immortal part of man. It is the work of sanctification to overcome sin in the higher nature.”



